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ABSTRACT

This annotated bibliography contains 30 references and provides resources to understand the theoretical foundations of reader response--a literary theory that is currently gaining increasing attention in literature instruction. The bibliography ranges from 1982 to 1989 and is divided into four sections. The first section, "Teaching of Literature and Poetry," presents citations that offer strategies on how to implement reader response in the literature classroom. The second section, "Teaching of Composition," cites sources that suggest ways to incorporate reader response into the composition classroom. A section on "Other Teaching Techniques" presents ideas for discussion based on reader response, and how reader response theory applies to journalism, film study, and reading instruction. The last section, "Theory and Research," examines several studies on reader response. (MS)

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Reader Response

by Michael Shermis

Literary theories are, by their very nature, abstract; therefore, they frequently remain unused in the classroom. This *FAST Bib* provides resources to understand the theoretical foundations of reader response—a literary theory that is currently gaining increasing attention in literature instruction. More importantly, it cites several sources that can be put to practical use in the classroom. Although it is clear there is no unified position on what reader response is, the ERIC database provides a number of sources to help teachers make use of the theory and several different perspectives on how to implement it. Most teachers will not find these suggested techniques new; the approach, however, differs in that students are not forced to accept one correct meaning of a text, but are part of the process of interpretation.

This bibliography has been divided into four sections. The first section, "Teaching of Literature and Poetry," presents citations that offer strategies on how to implement reader response in the literature classroom. The second section, "Teaching of Composition," cites sources that suggest ways to incorporate reader response into the composition classroom. "Other Teaching Techniques" presents ideas for discussion, journalism, film study, and reading instruction. The last section, "Theory and Research," examines a few studies on reader response.

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Teaching of Literature and Poetry

Canterford, Barbara. "Cultivating the Growth of Reader Response," *English in Australia*, n75 p50-58 Mar 1986.

Describes the implementation of a literature program for students in grade six based on reader response theory.

Corcoran, Bill; Evans, Emrys, (eds.) *Readers, Texts, Teachers*. Boynton/Cook Publishers, Inc., 52 Upper Montclair Plaza, P.O. Box 860, Upper Montclair, NJ, 1987. 264 p. ($10.75) [ED 279 012; document not available from EDRS]

Focuses on the need to offer and encourage the experience of reading literature in elementary schools. Includes essays that (1) explicate the

CS009565

range of theory known as reader response criticism; (2) argue its distinctive relevance to the needs of young, developing readers; and (3) indicate how classroom practices might be changed to accommodate the insights offered by reader-response theorists.

Flood, James; Lapp, Diane. "A Reader Response Approach to the Teaching of Literature (Research and Practice)," *Reading Research and Instruction*, v27 n4 p61-66 Sum 1988.

Summarizes the history of, and theory and research in, reader response approaches to teaching literature. Proposes an instructional process employing response-based teaching.

Fynes Clinton, Michael; Mills, Perry. "From a Teacher's Notebook—20: Making the Work Their Own: Responses and Ways In," *Use of English*, v38 n3 p14-19 Sum 1987.

Discusses ways to teach modern plays and poetry, using a reader response approach that makes the works more accessible to students.

Galda, Lee. "Readers, Texts and Contexts: A Response-Based View of Literature in the Classroom," *New Advocate*, v1 n2 p92-102 Spr 1988.

Discusses pedagogical implications of recent theory and research on response to literature. Contends that now teachers must be aware of readers, the text, and the context in which a text is read and discussed.

Gambell, Trevor J. "Response to Literature," *English Quarterly*, v19 n2 p120-29 Sum 1986.

Provides a background of response theory, two Canadian perspectives on response theory, a description of transactional response theory and response-centered curriculum, a discussion of the concepts of participant and spectator roles in literature and of the idea of narration and storying as literature, and a discussion of analysis and criticism.

Gambell, Trevor J. "Growth in Response to Literature," *English Quarterly*, v19 n2 p130-41 Sum 1986.

Discusses early experiences of children with literature, and the development of and growth in their response to literature. Argues for a response-centered, rather than criticism-centered, curriculum.

Gambell, Trevor J. "The Teaching of Literature," *English Quarterly*, v19 n2 p142-52 Sum 1986.

Reviews various methods of teaching literature and proposes that response to literature be an element in the teaching of literature. Considers the role of the teacher in a response-centered classroom and how to create a classroom environment that will encourage interpretation and response to literature.

Graham, Robert J. "David Bleich's Subjective Criticism; Reading, Response and Values in the Teaching of Literature," *English Quarterly*, v17 n1 p54-59 Spr 1984.

Outlines Bleich's theory of subjective criticism and traces its roots in the work of the psychoanalytic critic Norman N. Holland. Suggests that the subjective criticism approach to literature can help elicit student response in the classroom and initiate discussions of value questions which literature inevitably raises.

Holbrook, Hilary Taylor. "ERIC/RCS: Reader Response in the Classroom," *Journal of Reading*, v30 n6 p556-59 Mar 1987.

Explores briefly the New Criticism that dominated literature instruction until recently and then provides an overview of reader response theory and how response approaches can be used in the classroom to enhance reading.

McAnulty, Sara J. "Breaking the Barriers: Teaching Martin Jamison's 'Rivers' (Modern Poetry in the Classroom)," *English Journal*, v78 n2 p75-78 Feb 1989.

Uses Martin Jamison's "Rivers" to illustrate a reader-response approach to poetry. Describes the process of students creating their own "poems," while analyzing the author's poem. Concludes that this approach encourages the necessary personal connection required for poetic involvement.

Myers, Kris L. "Twenty (Better) Questions," *English Journal*, v77 n1 p64-65 Jan 1988.

Describes how reader response journals encourage students to interact with literary works. Presents 20 questions, based on David Bleich's response heuristic, which help guide students' responses.

Nugent, Harold; Nugent, Susan. "The Double-Entry Journal in Literature Classes." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the New England Association of Teachers of English Fall Conference, 1984. 14 p. [ED 252 862]

Suggests that the use of the double-entry journal activates students' prior learning and present feelings, fosters collaborative learning, integrates major language skills, and encourages the creative and discovery processes. Part of the journal assignment is a three-step response based on David Bleich's "Readings and Feelings."

Probst, Robert E. "Mom, Wolfgang, and Me: Adolescent Literature, Critical Theory, and the English Classroom," *English Journal*, v75 n6 p33-39 Oct 1986.

Discusses using reader response instead of standard literature interpretation teaching methods for the study of adolescent literature in high schools. Asserts that this method gives authority to the students as readers because they must assume responsibility for understanding the text, themselves, and the world.

Probst, Robert E. *Transactional Theory in the Teaching of Literature*. ERIC Digest. ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills, Urbana, IL, 1987. 3 p. [ED 284 274]

Explains the relationship of transactional theory (a reciprocal, mutually defining relationship between the reader and the literary text) to the teaching of literature. Differentiates between the efferent stance, in which the reader is primarily concerned with what he or she will carry away as information from the text, and the aesthetic stance, in which the reader focuses primarily upon the experience lived through during the reading.

Pugh, Sharon L. *Teaching Children To Appreciate Literature*. ERIC Digest Number 1. ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills, Bloomington, IN, 1988. 3 p. [ED 292 108]

Presents two basic approaches to teaching children to appreciate literature at any level: the structural (traditional literary analysis) and the reader response approaches.

Teaching of Composition

Lang, Frederick K. "Varieties of Literary Experience for the Developing Writer." Paper presented at the "Developmental Education in the 80's: The Realities" Conference, 1983. 16 p. [ED 266 451]

Argues that the reader response criticism that has arisen in direct response to the New Criticism can be adapted to the needs of the developing writer through its emphasis upon the experience of the reader engaged with the text. Asserts that the inventive application of the principles of reader response criticism can make writers out of developing writers.

Miller, Susan. "Is There a Text in This Class?" *Freshman English News*, v11 n1 p20-24 Spr 1982.

Elucidates the tenets of reader response criticism that are compatible with the classroom teaching of writing.

Price, Marian. "Reader Response in the Teaching of Composition." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Florida College English Association, 1987. 17 p.[ED 292 129]

Suggests that reader response can enhance a composition class in many ways and that reader response, by incorporating both intellect and feeling into an aesthetic reaction to literature, restores the subjective aspect that some forms of criticism deny. Argues that because the reader response model insures that individual responses are listened to and respected, it encourages involvement as readers and commitment as writers, and it discourages conformity of thought and the tendency to parrot the teacher's interpretations.

Other Teaching Techniques

Athanases, Steven. "Developing a Classroom Community of Interpreters," *English Journal*, v77 n1 p45-48 Jan 1988.

Describes a discussion model based on the reader response approach which thrives on controversy and encourages students to become an active, responsible "community of interpreters."

Brozo, William G. "Applying the Reader Response Heuristic to Expository Text," *Journal of Reading*, v32 n2 p140-45 Nov 1988.

Describes a reader response heuristic which approaches expository texts on a feeling and experiential level. Focuses on the work of one student writer to show how the student's interpretations of a text on Arab-Israeli relations was mediated by the student's feelings and experiences.

Chase, Nancy D. "Reader Response Techniques for Teaching Secondary and Post-Secondary Reading. College Reading and Learning Assistance." Technical Report 85-07. Division of Developmental Studies, Georgia State University, Atlanta, GA, 1985. 12 p. [ED 263 535]

Describes a five-step technique for secondary and postsecondary reading instruction, compatible with reader response theory, and addressing the

need for academically underprepared students to experience the validation of their personal responses to texts.

Chase, Nancy D.; Hynd, Cynthia R. "Reader Response: An Alternative Way to Teach Students to Think about Text," *Journal of Reading*, v30 n6 p530-40 Mar 1987.

Describes the fundamentals of reader response theory, focuses on the aspects most relevant to reading instruction, and presents a teaching method using reader response as a vehicle for improving students' ability to learn from text.

Kear, Lynn. "Teaching Film Studies: The Viewer Response Approach," 1988. 23 p. [ED 294 254]

Suggests that Louise Rosenblatt's reader response theory can be applied effectively to film study in the classroom. Contends that (1) several teaching methods can be used with the viewer response theory, such as using journals, class viewing of films/videos, immediate response papers, lengthy response papers, small group study, and conferences; and (2) the viewer response approach can result in richer, more meaningful film viewing experiences for both teachers and students and provide the basis for further, more involved film study.

McRae, Murdo William. "Turning Reader-Response Theory into Student-Centered Classroom Practice," *Exercise Exchange*, v31 n2 p21-23 Spr 1986.

Describes how reader response theory can be easily adapted to classroom practice, thereby sharpening students' interest in reading, increasing their capacity to reason and write, and fostering greater regard for different points of view.

Steiner, Linda. "Readers' Readings: Applications of Reader-Response Theory." Paper presented at the 70th Annual Meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, 1987. 31 p. [ED 284 221; microfiche copy available from EDRS; paper copy not available from EDRS]

Applies reader response theory to journalism. Posits that readers of newspapers, like readers of literature, take an active role in making meaning from the articles they read, rather than passively accepting news as a finished, static product. Concludes that (1) by incorporating reader response theory in journalism education, and changing the way journalists think, they may come to understand how readers differ from one another, how they differ from reporters, and how reporters and readers together make meaning; and (2) the study of the linguistic and conceptual forms used by real people to give meaning to their situations would offer journalists new rhetorical tools.

Theory and Research

Bogdan, Deanne. "A Taxonomy of Responses and Respondents to Literature," *Paideusis: Journal of Canadian Philosophy of Education Society*, v1 n1 p13-32 Fall 1987.

Contends that stasis, stock, kinetic, spectator, and dialectic responses to literature all serve to deny the popular misconception that literary analysis invariably deals a death blow to the vitally engaged, spontaneous, and thus authentic response. Describes these responses and notes that the dialectic response to literature is the only response that moves between the precritical, critical, postcritical, and autonomous levels.

Golden, Joanne M.; Guthrie, John T. "Convergence and Divergence in Reader Response to Literature," *Reading Research Quarterly*, v21 n4 p408-21 Fall 1986.

Describes a reader response study indicating a high degree of agreement on reader beliefs and text events. Also finds that students who empathized with a particular character identified the story conflict as pertaining to that character. Suggests specific reader-based and text-based factors that produce convergence and divergence in reader response.

Harker, W. John. "Literary Theory and the Reading Process: A Meeting of Perspectives," *Written Communication*, v4 n3 p235-52 Jul 1987.

Examines the relationship between current concepts of reading processes and contemporary theories of literary response. Argues that text-based reading theories are isomorphic with the New Criticism, and that reader-based theories of reading are isomorphic with reader-response criticism. Maintains that literary theory ignores interactive formulations of the reading process.

Johnson, Nan. "Reader-Response and the Pathos Principle," *Rhetoric Review*, v6 n2 p152-66 Spr 1988.

Reviews and equates theories of reader response and rhetorical theories on audience response (the pathos principle). Concludes that the fundamental synonymity between them repre-

sents a significant bridge between analysis of literary texts and the dynamics of formal and social discourse and provides a theoretical foundation for teaching reading and writing.

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